

SITUATION REPORT NO 5 INCIDENT NO. 97-003

DATE: January 15, 1997 **TIME: 11:00 a.m.**

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer State Capitol Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Winter storms and blizzard conditions statewide.
2. DEATH AND INJURIES: In addition to previous reports, 20 people in Morton County have been injured in traffic accidents and vehicle rollovers.
3. DAMAGE: The ninth winter storm of the season pushed Arctic winds into the state on January 15, resulting in the closure of I-29 and I-94. Transportation officials expect drifting snow will block other roads, especially in open country. The National Weather Service forecasts whiteout conditions across the state and wind gusts of up to 50 miles per hour, which could produce wind chills of 50 to 70 below. The forecast calls for up to one inch of snow.

Reports of damages received to date by the State Emergency Operations Center are as follows: six confirmed deaths and one unconfirmed death; 21 injuries; 45 counties and 21 townships report blocked roads and snow removal problems; two trains have been blocked by snow; eight counties have received reports of limited access to or dwindling supplies of livestock feed; six counties reported livestock problems and five recorded wildlife problems; four counties have received reports limited fuel supplies; seven counties received reports of dairy farmers who are forced to dump milk because blocked roads are limiting access to markets; four counties have addressed problems with limited grocery supplies; two counties reported farm families have been isolated by snow; five counties received notification that heavy snow has caused roofs to collapse; and two counties reported freezing temperatures have resulted in problems for rural water systems.

The N.D. Department of Agriculture thus far has received eight reports of problems from farmers. Six reports are related to emergency livestock feed, one to livestock losses, and one to roof collapse.

Bitter cold temperatures, combined with strong winds, caused city and rural water delivery systems to freeze. The city of Wildrose spent \$3,000 to thaw a water tower. The rural water system customers in southern Emmons County have been without service because employees cannot reach snow-blocked pumping stations. Broken water pipes have also caused damages at some North Dakota businesses.

Prolonged closures because of snow-related problems are causing economic hardships for North Dakota businesses.

Heavy snow continues to cause roof problems for private and public buildings, including farm buildings and a Wahpeton high school.

The State Hospital in Jamestown is running low on heating coal. Burlington Northern has placed the hospital on a priority list for the delivery of seven loads of coal.

Farmers are reporting herds of deer are gathering near farmsteads and along highways because they cannot find food in the deep snow.

Township roads in many counties may remain blocked and impassable until spring snow melt because townships have depleted snow removal funds.

Railroad companies have reported difficulty keeping rail lines cleared of snow.

4. RESOURCES COMMITTED:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: Refer to Major Actions.

FEDERAL: In addition to previous reports, the Minot Air Force Base and the Grand Forks Air Force Base have loaned equipment to statewide snow removal operations.

5: VOLUNTEER ACTIONS: In addition to previous reports, stranded motorists were provided shelter by private individuals and businesses.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: N.D. National Guard members are working around the clock to clear roadways of snow. Six personnel have been assigned to each road crew. Additional equipment not previously reported has been dispatched to the following locations: Grant County, two dozers; Sioux County, two dozers and a rotary blower on loan from the Minot Air Force Base; Ransom County, two dozers and a rotary blower on loan from the Minot Air Force Base; Dickey County, two dozers; McIntosh County, two dozers; Kidder County, two dozers; Sargent County, one dozer; Richland, two rotary blowers; Logan County, two dozers; and Adams County, two dozers. Two Guard dozers are working near Robinson to open N.D. Highway 36. In total, 62 soldiers are operating 19 dozers and six rotary blowers. The National Guard's Military Support to Civilian Authorities staff members are scheduling additional snow removal resources to local governments as equipment and manpower become available.

N.D. Department of Transportation (N.D. DOT) crews are concentrating snow removal efforts on east-west roads between Sterling and Valley City, south of I-94 and between U.S. Highway 83 and N.D. Highway 1. Trouble sites include N.D. Highways 3, 6, 13, and 21, where traffic is reduced to one

lane because of deep snow. The Minot, Devils Lake and Western District Offices report few problems, although the Devils Lake District has only a few roads remaining with one-way traffic. The Fargo District crews have two-lane traffic, but need to widen roads to prevent blowing snow from causing road closures. Up to four snow blower crews are working around the clock. N.D. DOT crews are operating 20 blowers, two of which are on loan from the Montana Department of Transportation.

Maj. Gen. Keith Bjerke, the Adjutant General for the N.D. National Guard, requested that Minot Air Force Base supply heavy duty snow blowers for snow removal efforts.

The Division of Emergency Management has requested six additional snow blowers from the Grand Forks Air Force Base. The request was placed through FEMA's Regional Operations Center in Denver.

The N.D. Agriculture Commissioner conducted an Agriculture Snow Emergency Task Force Meeting on January 14. Participants agreed that the N.D. Agricultural Statistics Service would conduct a survey of North Dakota's county agents to identify the agricultural community's problem areas and needs. This information will be provided to the Governor's Office and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to outline the needs of rural livestock producers in order to obtain financial assistance.

Participants included: the Governor's Office; representatives of U.S. Senator Kent Conrad's Office and U.S. Representatives of Congressmen Earl Pomeroy and Byron Dorgan's Offices; Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; Three Affiliated Tribes; N.D. Department of Agriculture; N.D. Division of Emergency Management; N.D. Office of Management and Budget; N.D. Department of Transportation; N.D. Agricultural Statistics Service; N.D. Farm Service Agency; N.D. Farm Bureau; N.D. Farmers Union; N.D. Extension Service; and, the N.D. Stockmen's Association.

Fort Berthold Reservation has been approved by the N.D. Farm Service Agency for the Acute Indian Distress Feed Program, which provides funding for emergency livestock feeding.

County and state agencies have hired additional temporary employees and/or contractors to help with snow removal efforts. Maintenance crews have been working overtime to keep snow emergency routes open. Snow plow crews escort ambulance and fire trucks on an as-needed basis.

Disaster or Emergency Declarations have been issued by the following counties: Burke, Foster, Griggs, Kidder, LaMoure, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Sheridan, Slope, Stark, and Ward. The cities of Dazey, Fingal, Fredonia, Gackle and Litchfield have also issued declarations. Since winter storms began, a total of 45 counties, eight cities and one tribe have issued declarations.

Steele fire fighters hauled water to cattle temporarily housed at Kidder County fair barns for a stranded truck driver.

A gas station delivered propane to a rural Minot man who had been trapped in a basement dwelling by up to 10-foot snow drifts. His propane tank was running very low.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.

8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.

9. OTHER: No change from previous reports.

Raymond J. Staiger, Acting State Director